

Plus: new student center hours, library books, and board games

THE LENS.



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Your News from the Jackson School Communications Office
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Communications Office

September 2026

My fellow geosciences enthusiasts,

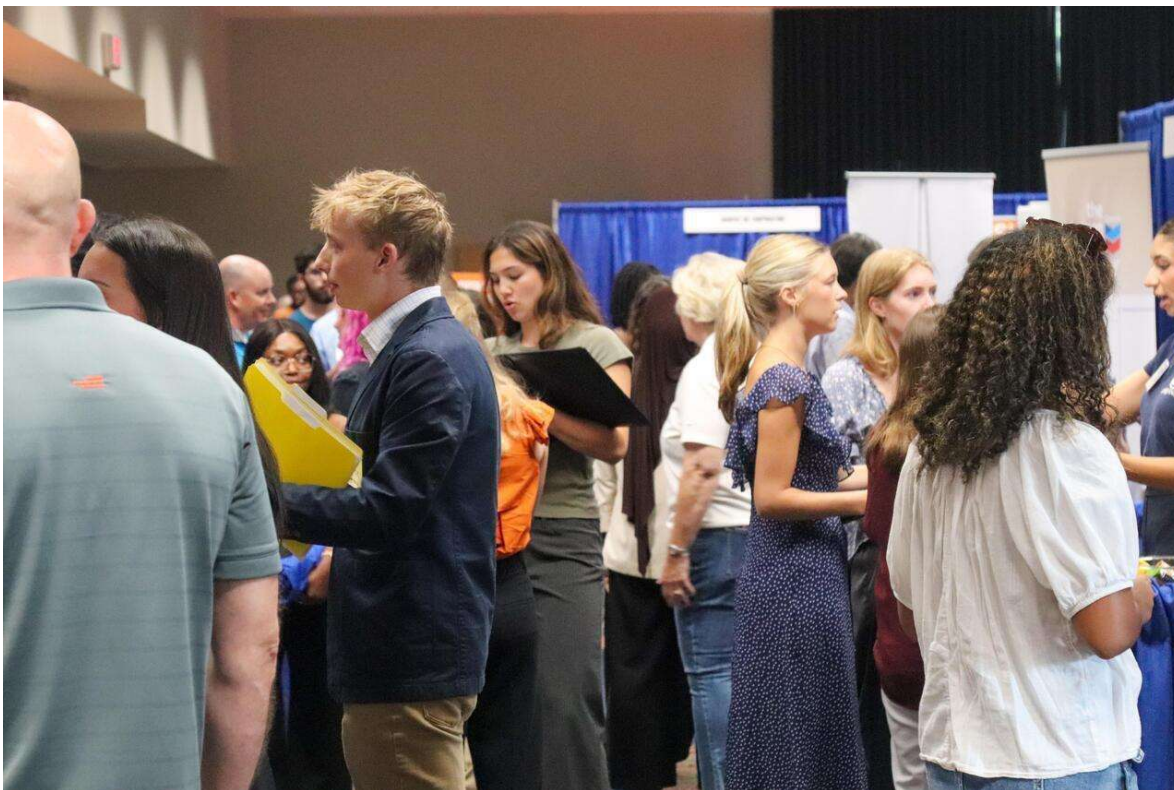
The pitter patter of open-toed shoes and hiking boots has the halls of the Jackson School ringing with academic fervor! The only thing louder are the screams at DKR Stadium.

In this issue, join us in congratulating our amazing Jackson School researchers who have been recognized by the AGU, NSF and AAPG, learn where Walter Geology Library materials can be found and how to access them, and read Professor Mrinal Sen's piece in Eos about building better subsurface models.

We also remember a dear colleague, educator and giant of climate science Professor Emeritus Robert Dickinson.

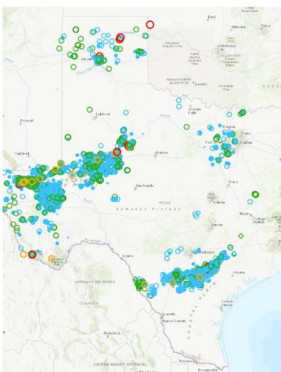
— Aaron Nieto, UTIG Communications Specialist

Making Connections



Last week, the Texas Geoscience Career Fair drew hundreds of students from the Jackson School and across campus to meet with employers in industries that span environmental consulting, oil and gas, and energy research, plus several state and local government agencies. We hope it leads to some great opportunities!

School News



TexNet Researchers Using AI to Build Early Warning System for Texas Earthquakes

Jackson School scientists have been monitoring earthquakes across Texas for a decade. Now, they're working on a way to warn people about them in a matter of seconds. The project is led by Research Associate Professor Yangkang Chen at the Bureau of Economic Geology. >> [Learn More](#)



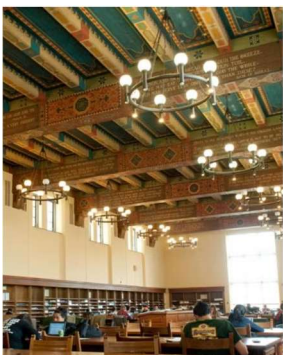
Remembering a Climate Giant

We are sad to share that Professor Emeritus Robert Dickinson passed away two weeks ago. In 2018, we interviewed Dickinson (and his former postdoc, Jackson School Professor Zong-Liang Yang) about his impactful career in climate science. >> [Read the profile](#)



Critical Minerals, Y'all!

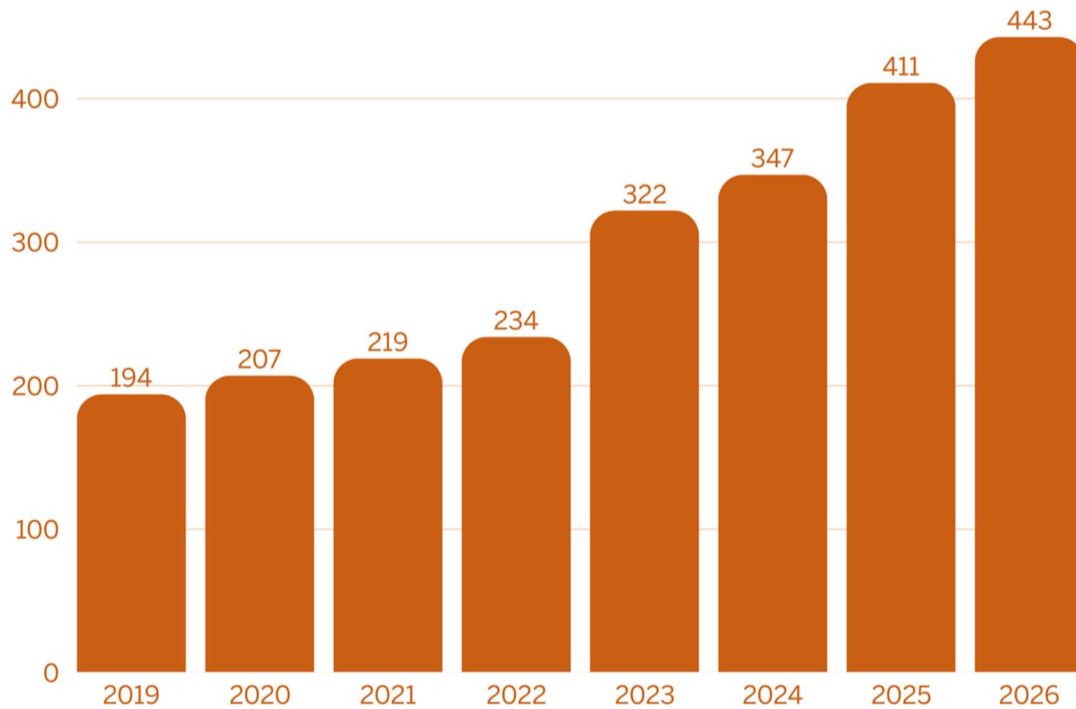
Associate Professor Marek Locmelis is the latest guest on Science Y'all, the Jackson School student podcast. Locmelis and graduate student Oliva Adelman discuss his pathway to the geosciences, the critical mineral boom, and, crucially, dachshunds. >> [Listen now](#)



How to Access Geology Maps, Books, and More

The Walter Geology Library's collections have been relocated to new spaces: the Life Science Library, the PCL map room (both of which can be visited in person) and an off-site library storage facility. >> [Learn more about accessing library materials](#)

Undergraduate Enrollment at an All-Time High — Again



The Jackson School's undergraduate enrollment continues to soar. With 118 first-year students joining the school this fall, total undergraduate enrollment has reached 443 students. Since the school formed in 2005, enrollment has never been so high. The most popular majors remain general geology and environmental science.

Graduate enrollment also remains strong, with 48 new students enrolling in Jackson School graduate programs this fall.

Awards



From left: AGU Awardees Professor Ginny Catania, Research Professor Laura Wallace, and Assistant Professor Shujuan Mao.

The American Geophysical Union, the world's largest Earth and space science association, has awarded three Jackson School researchers with some of its top honors.

- **Professor Ginny Catania** and **Research Professor Laura Wallace** have been elected 2026 AGU fellows, one of its most prestigious awards. Fellows are recognized for their scientific eminence, demonstrated through breakthroughs, discoveries or innovations that advance the Earth and space sciences.
- **Assistant Professor Shujuan Mao** received the 2026 Keiiti Aki Early Career Award, which recognizes one outstanding early career seismologist each year.
- And former postdoc **Srisharan Shreedharan** received the Jason Morgan Early Career Award.

More Awards

- **Assistant Professor Chenguang Sun** has won a [CAREER Award](#) from the National Science Foundation to explore carbonatites, a rare igneous rock that hosts important rare earth elements. Sun will use this award to recreate carbonatite magmas under controlled laboratory conditions and investigate how they release fluids as they cool, crystallize, and move toward the Earth's surface.
- **Research Associate Professor Peter Flaig** received the [Monroe G. Cheney Science Award](#) from the Southwest Section of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. The award is given to one scientist each year for their singular achievements in the science of petroleum geology in the southwest region.

In the Media

- [The Texas Tribune](#) spoke with Research Associate Professor Brent Elliott about the potential for lithium production in East Texas and big questions surrounding its regulation.
 - When a Hutto resident found a dinosaur-like footprint along a creek, [KVUE](#) called Chris Sagebiel, the collections manager at the Texas Vertebrate Paleontology Collections, to take a closer look.
 - Professor Mrinal Sen co-authored an article in [Eos](#) on how subsurface models can be improved using Bayesian inversion methods.
 - Earlier this month, Texas state senators held a hearing about how data centers stand to impact the state. [CBS News](#) covered the hearing, including testimony presented by Ning Ling, chief economist at the Bureau of Economic Geology and the principal investigator of COMPASS, a research consortium studying data centers.
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Fun & Games

Love the Texas Coast? This Board Game is for You



Game pieces from Disturbance: Port Aransas, featuring original artwork by Jackson School undergraduate student Janet Cañamar.

From the minds of scientists at the Jackson School and UT Marine Science Institute comes **Disturbance: Port Aransas**. To win, players must build a coastal community and ecosystem that can thrive and recover after challenges — from hurricanes to spring break tourists.

The board game was designed by Associate Professors Rowan Martindale and Ashley Matheny and graduate student Talita Gomes. Artwork is by undergraduate student Janet Cañamar. Learn more about Martindale's [educational board games](#).

Research

- How do rainfall measurements affect flood predictions? Using 2012's Tropical Cyclone Beryl as a case study, **Postdoctoral fellow Alka Tiwari** found that rain gauges, radar and satellites all predicted flood arrival times within hours of each other, and that satellite data was more reliable than expected. >> [More in the Journal of Hydrometeorology](#)
- **Professor Marc Hesse** co-authored a study that used Bayesian inference methods to create a permeability map for a confined aquifer in Nevada using subsidence data from different sources. A single InSAR deformation map provided a much better permeability map than multiple GPS readings. >> [More in Geophysical Research Letters](#)
- Millions of years ago, tectonic activity introduced stress into deep faults in the Permian Basin. Fast forward to today, and subsurface activity in the region is interacting with this stress and making these faults move. A new study by **TexNet scientists Dino Huang, Yangkang Chen, and Alexandros Savvaidis** maps the present-day stress field of the basin, and highlights seismic risk areas. >> [More in Seismica](#)

Events



A group Hook 'em from the 2025 Jackson School tailgate.

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- **ChatGPT Basics with AI Studio and OpenAI | Wednesday Sept. 30 | 10–11:30 a.m.** (For faculty and staff only)
 - Hosted by OpenAI's education team, learn how to make ChatGPT work for you. Real use cases from around UT Austin will be shared. >> [Register here](#)
 - **Jackson School Tailgate 🍷 | Saturday, Oct. 24, time TBD | Munib and Angela Masri Family Courtyard**
 - Get out your burnt orange and boots! Alumni, students, faculty members and staff are all invited to a school-wide tailgate before the Longhorns play Ole Miss!
 - **DeFord Lectures are Thursdays from 3:30–4:30 p.m.**
 - All are invited to the Jackson School's signature lecture series that invites prestigious geoscientists from here at UT and around the

world to share their research. Note: Cookies are now served AFTER the lecture.

Reminders

- **The Holland Family Student Center Now Open Till 8 p.m. M-Th**
 - All members of the Jackson School community can access the center with their UT ID after 4:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday.
- **Flu Vaccine Clinics**
 - UT is hosting outreach clinics for flu vaccination across campus in September and October. Visit [healthyhorns](#) to see clinic sites and schedules.
- **Remember to Use AI Responsibly. IT's Adrian Huh has these tips:**
 - Review UT Austin's [Acceptable Use of Generative AI Tools](#) and [Local and Cloud Services Decision Matrix](#) before entering university information into an AI service.
 - Check AI-generated content for accuracy, bias, privacy concerns, and appropriateness before using or sharing it.
 - Use AI to support — not replace — human judgment, especially for decisions affecting students, employees, research, or university services.
 - For assistance, contact JSG IT through the [JSG Help Portal](#) or the UT Information Security Office at security@utexas.edu.

One More Thing

Longhorn Football season is officially here!



From left: Dean Danny Stockli, Chief Development Officer Andrew West, and Director of Major Gifts Nick Warrington were among the crowd during the epic UT comeback against Ohio State.

Hook 'Em! 🤠

Have news you want to share?

Email communications@jsg.utexas.edu or any member of the communications office.

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